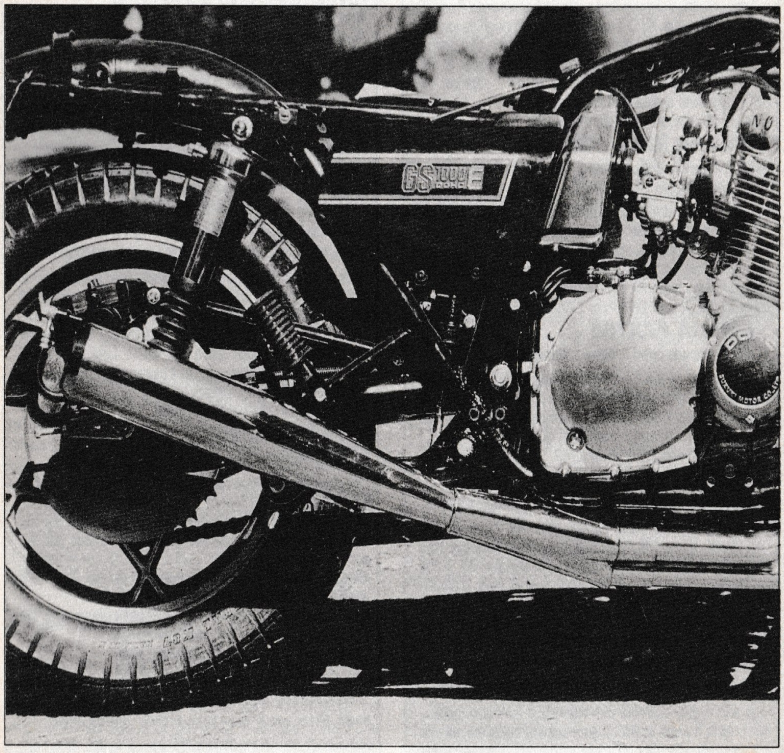
SUZI SCHMOOZE

Steve Bergman's Soft On The GS Shaftie



The G-model GS1000 produced by Suzuki is the shaft drive version of the E and S models. Very similar in superficial view but quite different to use!

Slight differences in power and torque delivery to suite it's more touring role ended up making the shafty more tractable and user-friendly without notably detracting from performance or handling – come on it'll hold 100 miles per hour all day, that's enough to lose you your freedom these days, let alone your license! That's not to say one of these bikes is good by modern standards – you had to know how to wrestle with a bike back then!

The 19-inch front wheel isn't going to let you fit the latest hot tyres and whilst the rear wheel is, for today, a more normal 17 inch, tyre matching leaves you with a small choice. Avon Super Venoms offer pretty good grip, other Dunlop tyres give less grip but more mileage, and Metzeler tyres ably demonstrate that whilst some tyres are good on some bikes the same choice will 'fox' you on another bike.

The skinny front forks and twin rear shocks with non-adjustable dampers will conspire with a weight of over 600lbs to scare you stupid. But given Suzuki's excellent shaft drive and the many aftermarket bits and bobs available to tune and hone the handling of the regular chain-driven model, the GS was pretty reasonable for its time and well up to every-day use and touring. Just don't expect to keep up with modern stuff on the wiggly bits.

Whilst on the subject of bad stuff, the oft talked-about dodgy Suzuki GS range of electrics can more than likely be ignored. I mean, come on, if it hasn't packed up by now it's gotta be OK. Isn't it?

Of good stuff there is plenty. Compared to modern bikes, and even compared to similar bikes, the GS1000G is well comfortable. The seat is deeply padded and will keep blood circulation to your derriere all day. No stopping every hundred miles to feel the exquisite delight of blood returning to your sore butt or the missus telling you for the hundredth time that your pride and joy is as comfortable as a pile of rubble! The suspension can, given the appropriate aftermarket treatment, be adjusted to the task in hand. And, in addition, there are plenty of luggage types available.

Fuel consumption will vary between 40-50 miles per gallon and couples with a fuel load of 4 or 4.5 gallons, depending on year, to give a range where you can decide when to stop. Honda VTR1000 owners (with no fuel tank to speak of) note!

Did you know that one of these babies would set you back probably £3K today, with a ropey one fetching £900? Compare that to £1250 and £600 back in the late 80s and (given other factors) that shows how well these jobbies hold their value.

In addition, the power is well up to propelling the GS1000G to the point where it is capable of destroying errant Ladas! At the expense of a total loss of an Exocet missile, ooops I mean GS1000!

SUZUKI GS1000G TEC

Model Life: 1980-83
NU Ins Group: 10
Engine: 997cc air-cooled four-stroke four
Power: 90bhp
Transmission: 5-speed, shaft drive
Brakes: Triple discs
Suspension: Twin shocks
Bodywork: Unfaired
Wheelbase: 1500mm
Dry weight: 255kg
Similar models: E with chain drive, S with bikini fairing
Prices: £300 to £1750